

# TEXTTEORI FÖR LÄSFORSKARE

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## ABSTRACT

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*Textteori för läsforskare ('Text theory for reading scholars')*

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The dissertation examines a prevalent problem in reception studies: how can we actually observe and describe the text (defined as an element that enables and restricts reading experiences) as either given and transcendent to any reading practice or as uniquely produced in each reading?

The author tries to find a solution by aid of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, Kenneth Burke's socio-rhetorics and Niklas Luhmann's systems theory. These perspectives are discussed in turn and tested in readings of a few pages on Mayakovsky and futurism taken from a textbook. The reading practices are constructed from national upper secondary school curricula.

Wittgensteinian life-forms, language games, rules, family resemblances and aspects are found to be sufficient to outline the principles but not the details of a functional text theory. Burkean form, identity and dramatism provide a lot of detail, but cannot answer important questions about artifacts and self-observation. These answers can be provided by use of Luhmann's autopoiesis, form, structural couplings, persons and self-reference, but at the cost of great abstraction and loss of analytical clarity.

The last chapter presents the conditions that need to be filled by any text theory with the ability to solve the problem. Most importantly, text, reader and reading practice must be considered as *immergent*, meaning that they are properly visible only from inside practices, which are always communal. In order to observe any text, the scholar must learn to immerse himself in the specific reading practice by way of its outward tokens (written rules, verbal accounts etc). The aspect seeing needed to perceive the text and describe its potential effects on reading experiences can only be acquired in the identity of a member of the specific reading community.

**Keywords:** *Text theory, reader-response theory, reception aesthetics, systems theory, language-games, dramatism, epistemology, interaction, transaction, didactics, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Kenneth Burke, Niklas Luhmann, Vladimir Mayakovsky, textbooks, national curricula*